

General William Hart House  
350 Main Street  
Old Saybrook  
Middlesex County  
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-366

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4-SAYBRO,  
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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7-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GENERAL WILLIAM HART HOUSE

HABS No. CT-366

Location: 350 Main Street, Old Saybrook, Middlesex County, Connecticut.  
House and grounds occupy approximately one acre.

Present Owner: Old Saybrook Historical Society

Present Occupant: Old Saybrook Historical Society.

Present Use: Headquarters of the Old Saybrook Historical Society. The Society will eventually make it into an historic house museum. The Historical Society is also providing headquarters for the Town's Bicentennial Committee during the American Revolution Bicentennial Era.

Statement of Significance: One of Old Saybrook's most important structures, the Gen. William Hart house is a fine example of 18th century Connecticut architecture. Its most important owner, Gen. William Hart was a member of a rich, educated and influential family. He was an adult during the richest period in Saybrook's history and was an important participant in Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary events from 1776 to 1817. The house does have sufficient architectural merit to make it important. Its strategic location near the center of town on Main Street lends a feeling of permanence to the area because it maintains the best of Saybrook's architectural heritage.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: C. 1750. Local tradition has previously dated the house as 1767, but research in connection with this report and the opinions of two architectural historians who have visited the house indicate an earlier date. It was purchased by William Hart in 1771 from James Clarke Jr. who seems to have inherited it in 1766 from his father who in turn may have inherited the property from his father after 1753. The date of 1750 must be considered approximate.
2. Architect: none known
3. Original and Subsequent owners:

The Gen. William Hart house is located at what is now designated as 350 Main Street in Old Saybrook. The street was laid out in the 17th century and has had various name designations through the years. The house is on the east side of the street beside the present day Congregational Church and across the street from a previous church building. The following town records are references to this property:

- 1753 Will, November 9, 1753, Guilford Probate Records, Volume 7, page 236. The will of Samuel Clarke leaving his various property including dwelling house, old barn, new barn, and blacksmith shop to his wife and sons including James. The land is not clearly specified, but is in the First Society in Saybrook which is proper for this house.
- 1766 Probate Inventory, December 2, 1766, Guilford Probate records,

Volume 9, page 357. The Inventory of James Clarke Sr. includes property, dwelling house, etc. in Saybrook which we assume to be this house. At this time the record states that his son James, Jr. (baptised in 1747) is to be allowed in court, although still a minor.

(To date, no clearer record of land transfer has been found. However, no other deeds to either James Clarke Jr. or Sr. have been found. The Clark/Clarke Genealogy indicates that these were the only Clerkes by the name of James living in Saybrook at the appropriate times. Sufficient biographical details of them and their families are available to indicate that the above assumptions are probably correct.)

- 1771 Deed, April 11, 1771, Saybrook Land Records, Volume 8, page 245. James Clarke of Saybrook sold to Mr. Wm. Hart, Jr. for 95 pounds, in the First Parish, not far from the meeting house about 5 acres bounded westerly by the town street, Northerly on the land of Dr. Samuel Field, Easterly on the Creek and ditch and a few rods of old fence dividing the premises from the homestead of Capt. Joseph Buckingham and South on the homestead of Capt. Samuel Shipmen with dwelling house thereon standing.
- 1817 Probate of will, October, 1817, Saybrook Probate Records, Volume 6, page 382. William Hart leaves this property to his son Richard William Hart with rights for William's new wife to live in the dwelling if she is widowed.
- 1821 Deed, July 11, 1821, Saybrook Land Records, Volume 20, page 333. The property and house are sold by Richard William Hart to Lucy Hart, William's widow.
- 1829 Deed, January 3, 1829, Saybrook Land Records, Volume 22, page 543. Mateon and Lucy Smith (General Hart's widow Lucy was by this time married to Gen. Matson Smith) sell the property to Richard L. Wood.
- 1837 Deed, January 17, 1837, Saybrook Land Records, Volume 25, page 459. Richard E. Pratt, administrator of the estate of Richard L. Wood who died at sea intestate, sells the property to Anne Chalker for \$2600.35. Anne Chalker was the mother of Richard Wood's wife, Nancy and after his death the property was subject to the widow's dower rights.
- 1854 Quit Claim Deed, November 27, 1854, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 2, page 7. After Anna Chalker's death the property was inherited by her grandchildren. William and Maria Hart Berrian, Richard Wood and William Wood quit claimed their portion of the property to Hetty and Nancy Wood, children of Richard Wood.
- 1882 Quit Claim Deed, April 8, 1882, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 5, page 486. Nancy Wood deeded her half of the property to Hetty Wood.
- 1894 Distribution of estate 1894, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 10, page 5. The property is left in the will of Hetty B. Wood to her nephew George Berrian

- 1923      Warrantee Deed, Octo. 23, 1923, Old Saybrook land records, Volume 23, page 146. Sale from Louise Berrian to Ford Walker.
- 1930      Judgement, September 12, 1930, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 33, page 28. The property is transferred from Ford Walker to Miriam Welker.
- 1941      Deed, May 1, 1941, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 43, page 248. Sale from Miriam Walker to Henry de Wolf deMauriac.
- 1954      Certificate of Devis, Old Seybrook Land Records, Volume Page . June 17, 1954. Under the will of Henry de Wolf deMauriac, the property goes to his wife Marion
- 1972      Warrantee Deed, November 7, 1972, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 152, page 317, from the Estate of Marion W. deMauriac to First Church of Christ Congregational.
- 1974      Deed, February 8, 1974, Old Saybrook Land Records, Volume 162, page 82 from First Church of Christ Congregational to Old Saybrook Historical Society. Sale includes the house and about one acre for \$ 78,000.
4.      Original plans, construction etc.: No plans exist of which we are aware. The main house and the kitchen all appear to be two different structures joined together after each had been built. Both structures are in many ways typical of other 18th century structures in Connecticut. Old Saybrook has an abundance of architecturally significant houses of this period making it obvious that the community had many talented builders, joiners and other craftsmen. One feature of the main house which is not typical of most of Connecticut is the structure of the chimney with fireplaces across the corners of the rooms. This type of fireplace is found in the Greenwich area in Connecticut, but otherwise is found more frequently outside of New England and in the mid-Atlantic region. The inclusion of the cross corner fireplaces in this house might indicate the sophistication of the owner or perhaps the existence of a master builder daring enough to be different. To date, we have not discovered the name of any architect who actually practiced in Saybrook.

5.      Alterations and additions:

This structure is actually two houses, neither of which has been radically changed, but at some time they were brought together to create one house. The clapboards which were originally the exterior east wall of the main house are now clearly visible within the cellar stairway where the small house or present all was brought up to join the larger main house. In the basement, the chimney foundation of the smaller building is brick and narrower than the chimneys in the main house. This leads us to believe that the all was moved up to the main house. Local hearsay agrees, but no records have been found to prove it.

In addition to the smaller house or present kitchen all there is another L-shaped addition on the back of the house which is unheated and was probably used as a laundry, studio, potting shed, etc. The date of this addition has not been verified but most of the work appears to be late 19th century or early 20th century.

The large verandeh on the south end west sidee was added by Mr. Berrian after he inherited the house in 1894. He also added the dormer windows on the third floor, east side so we can esseume that he did the interior work on the third floor. Other obvious modern additions are plumbing, central heating end electricity.

Much original work remains on the interior. The attic has been finished off, howavar, and made into rooms, including a bathroom with plumbing, electricity, heering end the dormer windows mentioned above. The front door with leaded glasse, the peculiar small piece of stucco work over it are modern additions but they do show in a photograph of 1914. The one bay entrance porch is probably not original to the house, but we cannot date its addition.

Other modern additions include French doors in three first floor rooms, and the butler's pantry which has cabinets with glasse doors. The windows on the east wall of the large room across the back room of the main house are now 6 over 6 panes which are different from the other windows in the house. One architectural historian has suggested that this large room was originally two rooms since there is some evidence of a previous wall. This may have been a drawing room, an unusually extravagant feature for a house of this era in New England. However, the Harts were very rich and well-travelled people end the drawing room would have been appropriate to their way of life in the late 18th century.

The house was used for a boarding school during the 19th century so some changes must have been made at that time. Changes in interior details such as woodwork and trim will be described under architectural details room by room. The Old Saybrook Historical Society is now in the process of restoring the house for their own headquarters and museum so that we can esseume that some of the more recent changes will be undone in order to restore the house properly to an earlier date.

The size of the lot has not changed greatly until just recently when the house was sold to the Historical Society with approximately one acre of land. Until that time it had been about five acres and earlier deeds mention barns and other outbuildings. There is a large depression in the lawn at the rear of the house which is probably where one barn stood. We know that there must have been a water supply and the 1914 Colonial Dames' report states that there existed at that time an unopened well. A small piece of the land was sold to the Congregational Church by Mrs. Chalker in 1839 on which the congregation built the present church

B. Historical Context:

William Hart was the son of Rev. William Hart, pastor of the Old Saybrook Congregational Church. During the pastership of Rev. Hart membership in the church was limited to established Christian leaders in the community. Therefore wealth and prastige went with membership. The ministers were usually wealthy and considerably more powerful in the community than after "the Great Awakening". evangelized and democratized the church in the community. Reverend Hart remained an "Old Light" or conservative who favored limiting church membership end maintaining the established church state political order. There is no record of his eldest son's education or early life but the fact that William Hart Jr., the eldest of his eight children became a leading Republican politician in a Federalist state is interesting.

Psychological historians could search for evidence of strident rebellion in William Hart Jr.'s youth to explain his liberalism. There are many possible explanations including the simplest being that he admired the ideas of the French Revolution. There is the very real possibility that his experience in the Revolution as a Major commanding the First Regiment of Light Horse particularly at Danbury during General Tryon's raid in April, 1777 made a deep impression on his thinking processes. "Old Lights" and established mercantile interests who were to become the Federalists must have had more sympathy with the British during the Revolution than those who were to become the Republicans. Major William Hart could well have had reason to hate the British and all that they stood for after his experiences in the war. Perhaps the reason for his Republicanism was that it made sense to him.

William Hart Jr.'s political efforts were persistently against the Federalist majority. His record indicates an ambitious faith in the ultimate success of the Republicans in the nation's political system. The Colonial Records of Connecticut reveal an extensive listing of political activity. He is a Representative to the state legislature from Seybrook in 1783. In May of 1790 he was a member of a three man committee appointed by the legislature to study the preservation of fish in the Connecticut River. In October of 1792 the legislature appointed Hart Major General of the Second Division of militia for the state. In October of 1796 William Hart was appointed an elector for President. In May of 1799 William Hart was a member of the legislative committee concerning itself with establishing schools in Connecticut. In 1803 Hart ran for two political positions and lost to Federalists. In May he ran for the U.S. Congress against Simeon Baldwin. In October he ran for Lt. Governor against John Treadwell. Also in May of this year of defeats for Hart he lost his legislative seat to the Federalist Richard Ely.

That same year Hart was visited by Aaron Burr, the well known Republican Vice President under Jefferson whose conflict with the Federalist Alexander Hamilton ended in the duel of 1804. Prior to 1803 the Federalists in Connecticut became concerned about the seeming growth of Republicanism and they attempted to control this by making the elective process more orderly. One attempt manifested in the "Stand Up" law of 1801. Burr visited Joseph Wilcox as well as Hart in 1803; the two Connecticut men had been outspoken opponents of the "Stand Up" law when it was passed. Maybe Burr had some strategy to combat the seeming success of the Federalists in controlling the electoral process. The "Stand Up" Law required local freemen in elections to physically indicate their votes by hand or by standing. Obviously some freemen would fear revealing their Republican opinions when ministers, bankers, and employers or associates of employers were looking on. Also the elective process was put under the control of Federalist justices and assistants who were in charge of counting the votes. Federalists contended that the law saved time; Republicans claimed that the Federalists controlled the electoral process. After this difference of opinion

became public, the Republicans adopted extension of suffrage as one of their important platforms. This apparently was no help to William Hart in 1803.

William Hart, Jr. was a merchant and investor as well as a politician. His most notable land investment was in the Western Reserve. Since the original colonies were deeded with no clear western boundaries, all of the states were required to convey their western lands to the federal government after the revolution. This very simply solved developing land quarrels between the states. However, the states begged and won reserves in the west with which they could pay their militia land bounties issued during the Revolution. Connecticut reserved about three million acres of land along the south shore of Lake Erie which became known as the Western Reserve. When the state of Connecticut sold the Reserve to the Connecticut Land Company for money to be used to run a public school system in the state, William Hart invested \$30,462 in the company. This was a substantial investment for that time. Whether he realized windfall profits or any profits at all is not now known, but there could well have been more to the investment than the desire for profit. The success of the Reserve would help spread Jeffersonian Republicanism because the new settlers would probably be farmers. Farmers in the West almost always conflicted with the establishment merchants and bankers of the East who favored the prevailing social structure. This meant Federalists who wanted the political establishment to support an aristocracy and a power elite. Idealistically the Jeffersonians justified the westward expansion as a means to contributing toward the perfectibility of man. More people close to the soil would lead to the perfection of more men in the eyes of the Jeffersonians. Generally though, the more expansion the more Republicans. William Hart could well have seen the Western Reserve as an outlet for his etymologized Republican ambitions in Connecticut.

At the death of William Hart the house passed to his only son Richard Hart. Richard sold it to his stepmother Lucy who was by then remarried to General Matson Smith. In 1829 the Smiths sold it to Capt. Richard Wood who died at sea in 1831. The ownership was then divided between his widow and his mother-in-law, Anne Chalker. Anne Chalker sold some of the land to the Congregational Church in 1839; the new church was built there in 1840. The house passed to the Woods' children and ultimately to their daughter Hetty who became the sole owner. Hetty Wood and Nancy Wood ran a boarding school for girls in the house for a while during the 19th century. Hetty Wood left the property to George Berrien, her sister's son. The other owners were Ford and Miriam Walker, Henry deWolf deMeuriac, and the Congregation Church. The Old Saybrook Historical Society now owns it.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- a. Architectural character: The main section of this 18th century house is of particular architectural interest because of its fine interior details. It is also of interest because of the chimney and fireplace arrangement and some other features which are more common to areas further south than New England. The house and its setting are an important part of Old Saybrook's village area which includes a number of other 18th and 19th century houses. Having been the home of General William Hart, a Saybrook native, makes it historically significant to the community and to the state.
- b. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main house is about  $42\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide by 31 ft. deep. The kitchen ell is about  $17\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide by 23 ft. deep with a 6 ft. pantry extending about 7 ft. to the south. An 11 ft. wide unheated, one-story room extends from the kitchen  $25\frac{1}{2}$  ft. to the east. Another adjoins this forming an ell approximately  $26\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide by 12 ft. deep. In this study we will refer to these two rooms as the back ell. A one story ell approximately 14 ft. wide by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deep projects on the north side of the house where the main house is joined to the kitchen ell. The main house is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  stories high with a five bay facade on the street. The kitchen ell is two stories high and the other additions are one story.
2. Foundations: The main house has a low foundation of cut, dressed granite with a wooden watertable projecting above it. The foundation of the kitchen ell is composed of slightly larger granite blocks. Under the first section of the back ell the foundation is of stone but of more random sizes and less carefully laid. The back section of the back ell rests on stone legs with no real foundation. There is a wooden bulkhead door leading to the basement under the east side of the kitchen ell.
3. Walls: The front and sides of the main house are covered with beaded clapboards of varying widths which give the visual impression of geometric perfection. To the viewer at street level all clapboards appear to be of equal width although those at the top are wider. The clapboards on the back of the main house have plain edges. In fact, the entire rear wall including the windows appear to be a replacement. On the south side the stones of the chimney show at the first floor level. Wide corner boards form pilasters at the corners.

The kitchen ell is covered with plain edged clapboards except under the porch roof on the south side of the ell where wide vertical beaded boards form the siding. The first section of the back ell is covered with vertical boards about 10" wide. The second section of this ell is covered with narrower vertical boards. The entire house is now painted white with dark green louvered shutters.

4. **Structural system:** The main house and the kitchen ell are braced frame, post and beam, all wood. The standard post, joist, etc. arrangement is used. The back ell is also of wood with lighter construction.
5. **Porches:** There is a one bay entrance porch on the west side. The gable roof projects over the top one of three brownstone steps. Pilasters frame the door. Doric columns on awkward board pedestals support the roof which is trimmed with dentils.

A large "verandah", built in the 1890's is on the south and east sides of the main house and continues under the roof of the kitchen ell. This porch is one story high with a wood painted floor made of narrow boards on the south side and 10" wide boards on the east and under the kitchen ell roof. A handrail supported by turned balusters follows the outside edge of the porch. The shed type roof is supported by posts chamfered to imitate columns. Stone steps give access to the porch in two places: by the southwest room and the kitchen ell door.

There is a hood on brackets over the door to the first section of the back ell.

6. **Chimneys:** Two interior end chimneys of brick with corbeled caps project through the peak of the roof on the main house. One brick chimney projects through the east end of the peak of the kitchen ell roof.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** The door which is now at the main entrance to the house is not original. The two upper panels have been replaced by leaded glass. On the south side a French door connects each room to the porch. Another French door leads from the northeast chamber to the outside. On the west side there is a Dutch door with wide vertical beaded boards on its exterior. It has extra large wrought iron HL hinges with some leather washers remaining. There is a large keyhole latch on the top half of the door and there is no trim around the opening.

The kitchen ell is entered from its south porch and the exterior of the door is made from two wide vertical beaded boards. Two openings have been cut in the top half of the door to accommodate glass panes. The door is held in place by two strap hinges on which some leather washers remain.

The first section of the back ell has more modern batten doors on the north and south sides. The second section has a Dutch door on the west side

- b. **Windows:** The windows on the west, south and north sides of the main house are all double hung sash with 12 over 12 lights. Many of the panes are greenish in color and quite wavy. There are five bays on the front and two bays on the sides. On the back of the house most of the windows have six over six panes and are all later additions. A number of windows have a metal hook on the outside of the frame with which the lower sash can be held open.

In the kitchen ell the windows are double hung sash with 8 over 8 lights on the south side, 12 over 12 on the north side, 6 over 6 lights on the east side first floor and 8 over 8 lights on the east side second floor. In the back ell the windows are of various shapes and sizes, mostly salvage.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main house has a gable roof with steep pitch and three gabled dormers on the east side with shingle siding. The kitchen ell has a rather steep symmetrical gambrel roof. The north ell has a flat roof. The back ell has a gable roof with low pitch and hip at the corner where the two sections meet. All roofs are now covered with tar paper and wood shingles can be seen under it on the main house and the kitchen ell.
- b. Cornice: On the main house there is a molded main cornice which also follows the line of the roof gable. This same molding on the cornice returns forms the capitals of the corner pilasters. A smaller cornice follows the roof line at the back of the kitchen ell but it looks more modern or as though it may have been added during some alteration.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First floor: The main house has a central stair hall entered through the west facade. The stairs ascend from West to East. To the left and right of the hall are parlors of nearly equal size. At the East end of the hall is a large room extending across the rear two thirds of the main house. It measures 15'3" deep by 27'8" wide. At the north end of this room is the library which is 14'10" wide by 13'9" wide. Through the north wall of the library is access to the one story North ell which is 11'3½" deep by 13'8" wide. The kitchen ell is entered through a door in the east wall of the main house. It contains one large room about 17' by 18' (now partitioned to create a butler's pantry) and a 5'8" by 11'2" pantry projecting at the Southeast corner of the room. An enclosed stairway runs from north to south at the West end of the room. A door through the east wall enters the first section of the back ell which is 25'5" deep by 10'8" wide. From the east wall of this section is an entrance into the second section of the back ell which is 26'4" wide by 11'8" deep.
- b. Second floor: The main house has four corner chambers of approximately equal size. There is a center stair hall above the one on the first floor. At the head of the stairs, there is a very narrow passageway and an approximate 10' square bathroom. To the north of the bathroom is another small hallway with doors to the attic stairway and the second floor of the kitchen ell. There is one room on the second floor of the kitchen ell with closets built under the gambrel on the south side.
- c. Third floor: This floor has been divided into five small rooms and a bathroom with the rear dormers giving additional light. The roof construction is not visible.

2. **Stairways:** An open, single flight stairway on the south wall of the entrance hall ascends from west to east up to the second floor. Panelled wainscot along the stair wall across the ramp of the hand rail. There are thirteen steps with moulded nosing and open string trimmed with simple brackets. Three turned balusters per step support a handrail which eases into the turned newell. There is a photograph of the stairway facing page 180 of The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut by J. Frederick Kelly.

The stairway from the second floor to the attic ascends from east to west end is entered through a doorway near the door to the kitchen ell. It is parallel to, but not over the main stairs. An enclosed stairway runs from north to south in the kitchen ell and connects the first floor to the second. Directly under it is the rough stairway into the basement.

3. **Flooring:** Most of the flooring is made of wide boards ranging in width to more than 15", probably pine. The boards in the attic floor and in other places are hand planed. Rose headed and square headed nails hold them in place. Most are now finished with varnish, some grey and brown paint from earlier time remains inside closets. Some marks indicating earlier use of carpeting also remain. In the attic some very early straw matting remains. Linoleum covers the kitchen floor and a new floor of narrow hardwood has been laid in the library. The north ell has flooring of 6-8" wide boards. A line in the flooring here corresponding to an exterior vertical board indicates where this ell was enlarged at some time.

4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Most of the walls are now covered with modern wallpaper but the old plaster remains underneath. Plaster was made at an early date in Saybrook due to the abundance of shells along the seashore. Most of the ceilings also have very early or original plaster which is still in very good condition.

5. **Openings:**

- a. **Windows:** The placement and pane arrangement has been noted in the description of the exterior. Many panes with greenish or wevy glass remain throughout the house indicating that much of the sash is old. There are five windows in the main house which are undoubtedly original: The south window in the second floor southeast room, the north window in the second floor northeast room, the two windows at the north end of the attic and the window in the southeast attic room. On all of these windows the muntins are noticeably wider and flatter and the sash is narrower.

Most of the windows in the house have architrave trim of the 18th century type. On most of the windows where plain trim is used, it is obviously repair or replacement.

- b. **Doors and doorways:** The house contains a wide variety of old panelled doors, all mortise-and-tenon construction and held together with wooden pegs. Noteworthy ones are mentioned in descriptions of individual rooms. The number of panels varies, some have had panels replaced by glass and some are not in their original places. A few doors are modern replacements which are easily identified by the sharpness of the millwork and lack of heavy layers of paint. Most of the doorways have architrave trim similar to that used around the windows, seen elsewhere in Saybrook and along the East Coast in 18th century houses.

6. Decorative features and trim (room by room):

- a. Entrance hall on the first floor: The stairway which is the main feature of the room is described above. The moulded cornice surrounds the room and the stairwell, where pendants drop from each corner. There is a panelled waincot on all walls and moulded panelling also fills the triangular space beneath the stairs. All the woodwork is painted white and under the white can be seen paint which imitates oak graining and under that is a dark gray-green which was probably the original color. The entrance door is old, but not original and has had leaded glass panels added in the top half. Although there are large strap hinges, older larger pintles still exist on the door frame which must have been used for another door. The door to the northwest parlor is mortise and tenon construction, 6 panels in 3 tiers.

One of the most interesting features is the Dutch door at the east end of the hall directly opposite the entrance door. There are three vertical moulded panels on each half and it is finished on both sides. Here we can also see the oak graining and green paint. It has HL hinges which appear to be original and a large keyhole latch with brass handle on the top half.

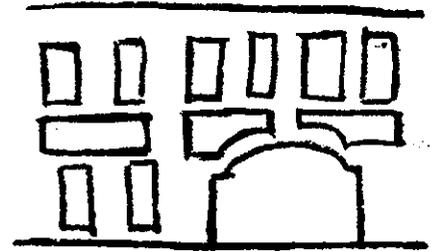
- b. Northwest room on the first floor: Most of the woodwork, panelling and finish here is modern but well done. The corner cupboard, except its doors, is old and an earlier report on the house states that it was moved here from a back room. The fireplace goes across the Northeast corner and the hearth extends beyond the fireplace.
- c. Southwest room on the first floor: The window on the south side was replaced by a French door in the 1890's. The fireplace goes across the southeast corner and is surrounded by salvage panelling, and a large rather awkward dentil course (evidence of a type which can also be seen in another house in Saybrook and is perhaps the remains of a more ancient structure here in town) under the cornice. There is a mantel shelf supported by pilasters which are not original to the house but may have been added before the salvage panelling. Corner posts cased with beaded boards are in three corners and there is a remnant of wainscot beside the French door. In this same spot and also by the door to the back room there is a remnant of a chair rail. The skirting board with base mould on top is probably a late 18th century addition.
- d. Southeast room on first floor: Many changes have been made in this room during the years but the original features which remain are sufficient to warrant further research. Obviously not original are the French doors, swinging door to the kitchen, archway to the Northwest room, glass doors to the library and 6 over 6 windows on the east wall. There is a corner cupboard with four butterfly shelves in the southeast corner. This is an antique piece although the doors are not original and it is not original to this room. There are two single panel doors on the lower half and the sides are trimmed with fluted pilasters with flute stops. The fireplace with rectangular opening across the southwest corner is surrounded by antique panelling over which a more modern mantel has been added. Here again is the oak graining and dark green paint. A moulded cornice tops the fireplace wall and the north wall. The plain baseboard has a simple beaded top.

The pilasters are the most interesting decorative elements in the room and they have led to much speculation as to the original size and composition of the room. There are two on the north wall and one on the north side of the rear exit which are exactly alike: nine flutes, moulded pedestal and capital, painted with oak graining and green paint underneath. The fourth pilaster which is on the south side of the rear exit has ten flutes and more modern moulding and appears to be an attempt to copy the other three. There is some evidence that there was another east/west wall dividing this room creating a withdrawing room or another hall similar to the entrance hall. While such an arrangement was more typical of the mid-Atlantic or South, it might have been created by General William Hart and would have been suited to the mode of life of this rich and well-travelled man who was in regular contact with many of his powerful contemporaries.

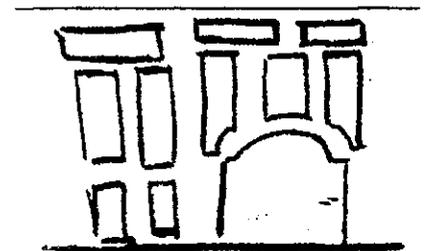
The Dutch door to the entrance hall is described above and it is echoed by another Dutch door which makes the rear exit. This door has five panels in two tiers on the top half and three panels in the bottom half. There is one door knob and three bolts. The exterior of this door is made of wide vertical boards held in place by clinched nails.

- e. The Northeast room: Modern bookshelves line the south and east walls. The window on the north side has been replaced by French doors and the doorway into the small north ell which is a bathroom. The most interesting feature here is the fireplace across the northwest corner. The rectangular opening is surrounded by tiles depicting Aesop's fables. Heersay is that they are original to the house but some disagreement indicates that analysis by an expert would be worthwhile. A collection moulding outside the tiles is probably original. The panelling on the fireplace wall is certainly salvage and one architectural historian has suggested that it was recently created from shutters with the piece of panelling on the north wall being an old door. Large salvage dentils top the panelling and a strip of Victorian reeding outlines the sides. A projecting mantel shelf has also been added.
- f. Kitchen: Modernization in this room has left many interesting features. A large fireplace on the east wall has a rectangular opening and an oven beside it. The oven has a very fine cast iron door (though not original to the house) with a design and the letters AAF & NCW & Co. on it. The fireplace was probably larger at one time and the stone hearth extends across the fireplace and the oven area. There is a simple mantel shelf and small remnants of panelling in the room indicate that more of it might be revealed in restoration. The pantry off the kitchen has wide vertical beaded boarding indicating its 18th century construction. Remnants of vertical board wainscot are in the passage to the back ell and at the foot of the stairs.
- g. Hall on second floor: The balusters and handrail on the main stairway continue around the open well. The first floor cornice is also repeated here as well as the oak graining and green paint. The baseboard is plain with a beaded top. The ceiling is covered with old plaster and there is no evidence of the front plate which does show in the other rooms on this floor.

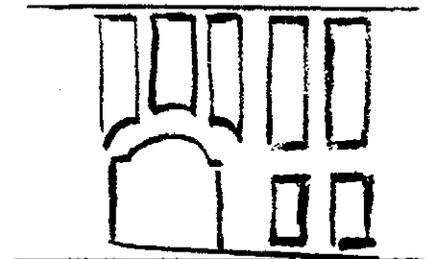
- h. Southwest room on second floor: The ceiling here is a few inches higher than in the hall and across the front of the room the front plate can be seen cased in beaded boards. In the front of the room are flared cornerposts cased in beaded boards and the simple baseboard has a beaded top. The fireplace with curved opening goes across the southeast corner. It is surrounded by bolection moulding and original panelling in design as shown. A mantel which was once added over the panelling has been removed. The closet is a 20th century addition.



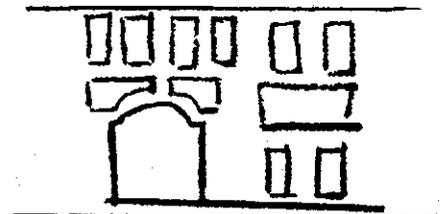
- i. Northwest room on second floor: All woodwork is approximately the same as that in the southwest room except for the design of the fireplace panelling across the northeast corner which is as shown here:



- j. Northeast room on second floor: This room has the same cased beams and corner posts and similar woodwork to the two previously described rooms. An original window remains on the north wall as described above under windows. Some early alterations have been made in the room but it is interesting to note that leather washers remain on both the trim and the door sections of the HL hinges on the door to the back passage. Panelling on the fireplace across the northwest corner is as shown:



- k. Southeast room on second floor: The woodwork and trim is basically similar to that in the other upstairs rooms. The 6 over 6 window on the east wall is not original, but the window on the south wall is one of the original windows described above under windows. The fireplace is across the southwest corner and panelling pattern is as shown at right. The door to the bathroom has leather washers on both parts of the hinges indicating that this was originally probably an entrance to the room from a hall. An interesting, but not original Norfolk latch is on this door. Under the paint on the fireplace paneling is a dark red-brown color which one authority believes to be the evidence of early red paint made with tung oil which penetrated deeply into the wood.



- l. Room above the kitchen ell: This is a very simple room, the cased beams, wide floor boards certainly being original. The free standing chimney without a fireplace goes up through the east end of the room.
  - m. Basement: The stone foundations for the walls and main house chimneys are all visible in the basement. A newer brick foundation supports the ell chimney. Many original beams remain, some still covered with bark. The reatortation now being carried on by the Historical Society includes work in the basement.
7. Hardware: The entire house contains a remarkable collection of early hardware with notable examples mentioned below in individual rooms. Included are many styles of thumb latches, box locks, keyhole locks, strap hinges, HL hinges, window hooks, bolts and an oven door. Leather washers on many of the hinges indicate that they are still in their original positions.
8. Mechanical equipment:
- a. Heating: There are eight fireplaces in the main house, all going across the corners of rooms. One fireplace with an oven is on the east wall of the kitchen ell. All have brick backs and most of the hearths are stone. Paneling is described below under individual rooms.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and orientation: The house occupies a site at what is now designated 350 Main Street. It is also Connecticut State Route 154. The house is set back about 20 feet from the sidewalk and the lot is basically level except for a large depression at the rear. The lot now includes about one acre, approximately a rectangle with "good taste" boundaries. A privet hedge borders the sidewalk and most of the rest of the lot is now lawn. Some gardens have been started and a complete plan for landscaping has been developed and will be carried out by the Historical Society. A driveway now goes from Main Street to the back ell on the north side of the property.

Old records tell us that barns and other outbuildings have existed on the property in the past. Through most of its life, the building has had a lot of five or more acres, so some of the outbuildings must have been away from the present one acre lot. However, there remains a large depression at the east (rear) of the house with stone foundation around it, which was probably the site of one of the barns. At present, there is no well, but at least one does exist in the vicinity of the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: A number of old photographs exist in the community and in the files of the Old Saybrook Historical Society, 350 Main Street, Old saybrook, Connecticut.

B. Maps:

Saybrook and Old Saybrook, surveyed and drawn by E.M. Woodford and published by Richard Clark, Philadelphia, 1853.

Middlesex County, Connecticut from surveys under direction of H.F. Walling, 1859, published by H. and C.T. Smith and Company, New York

The so-called Cheeseborough Map, owned by the Old Saybrook Historical Society, 350 Main Street, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Atlas of Middlesex County by F.W. Beers, 1874

C. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Bull, John E. (comp.). John Clarke and His Descendants. Only four handwritten copies exist, one of which is at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford

Historical and technical information in regard to the Gen. William Hart House compiled by the Society of Colonial Dames, 1914. Original copy in Connecticut state library in Hartford

Original church records in the First Congregational Church in Old Saybrook. These records are kept in the church's office.

Elias Tully's account book owned by the Old Saybrook Historical Society, 350 Main Street, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Collection material of Mr. Thomas Stevens, Deep River, Connecticut

Connecticut Colonial records and Connecticut State records

Collection material of the Old Saybrook Historical Society, 350 Main Street, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Land records and other materials in the office of the Town Clerk, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Historical and geneological materials in the Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut: The Barbour Collection of vital statistics, church records, family bible records, probate records, microfilmed land records and probate records of Saybrook, Guilford and Middletown

b. Secondary and published sources:

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